

and the entire pastoral staff, the Reverends Teresa Chamberlain, Kristen Jeide, Dr. James Newby and S. Linda Purdy.

We are also very thankful to all of the clergy who have served Wayzata Community Church during the past 125 years, as well as the other church staff, lay leaders, teachers, musicians, choir members, volunteers and other friends and members of Wayzata Community Church.

Mr. Speaker, on this special anniversary of Wayzata Community Church, let us pay tribute to 125 years of ministry and mission and pray that this wonderful community of faith will provide many more years of spiritual growth, support and service to the people of the Lake Minnetonka community.

□ 1600

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RESTORING DEMOCRACY TO AMERICA

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of turn.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Washington is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, you can always tell when the Republicans fear an upcoming election because they start apologizing for their past transgressions.

So it should come as no surprise that the President finally acknowledged the presence and use of secret CIA prisons. The American people happen to think that the U.S. Constitution is a document that was never intended to be shredded and discarded like last week's newspaper, but that is exactly what is happening by the President and his rubber-stamp Republican Congress.

We do not have to subvert the freedoms and principles that make us Americans so that the President can fumble his way through finding and fighting terrorists like bin Laden.

We still believe in the rule of law, the first amendment, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. We believe in the Geneva Convention, and the President undermines the American credibility, power and leadership around the world by dismissing a document so important that it is incorporated into the manuals of the U.S. Armed Forces.

America is not a democracy at your convenience, Mr. President. Without the protections provided by the first amendment, the American people might never have known about the abuses at Abu Ghraib; and without the

first amendment, the American people would have never known about the unauthorized wiretaps of the American people, even when there is a secret court specifically set up to enable America to defend itself without destroying the Constitution and the Bill of Rights in the process.

The American people still believe in the rule of law, and they can see that the President suspended the Constitution, the Geneva Convention, and the Bill of Rights because he finds them inconvenient.

The policies of this administration and the Republican Congress have not made America safer, but America is in danger on a whole new front, Presidential indifference to the principles and ideals that we are fighting for.

The President was given the tools and the resources after 9/11, but he pulled out before the job was done. He diverted our soldiers and resolve from Afghanistan to Iraq. It was a bad decision then, and it has become disastrous now in both places.

But with an automatic rubber-stamp Congress in the House and the Senate, the President could tell them what to think, tell them how to vote and get whatever he wanted. There was no balance in our government to ask the tough questions and hold the President accountable. There still is no balance in our government that can protect the American people and our founding policies from the brute force of the Republican power machine.

The President finally admitted he authorized secret CIA prisons, and in the next breath, demands the Congress authorize him to keep doing whatever he wants. And if the Republicans remain in power, they will do exactly what the President wants. No debate, no balance, nothing short of outright misrepresentation of the American people.

The Republicans misrepresent the American people when they rubber-stamp everything the President wants. That is not how America works, and it is not how democracy works. America is all about balance, debating different points of view, coming together as one Nation, standing on common ground. But that fundamental approach requires accountability, and there has been none under the Republicans.

For goodness sake, the Republicans could not even swear in Big Oil CEOs when they were called to Capitol Hill over skyrocketing prices. Republicans could not require these people to swear to tell the truth. Maybe they did; maybe they did not. We will never know.

And that is what the midterm election is really all about. America is tilted not merely to the right, but off the map entirely. Neocons who no one elected are telling the President and the Vice President what they are expected to do and what the Republican Congress will pass.

The American people may not understand the rules of Congress; but know this, Republicans delay every vote on

the floor of this House until they can twist enough arms to get what the neocons behind the curtain want. Debate is gone. Accountability is gone. And that is why the Republican control should be gone.

The Republicans have squandered their chance to govern. Republicans have shortchanged the American people for 12 long years. With free speech and free press, now the American people know it.

November is about restoring democracy to the Nation best able to protect it. November is about restoring balance to a Republican Congress that has forgotten that it works for the people, not for the neocons. No democracy can survive without a Congress that looks at the President's policies and asks questions and sometimes says no.

This President has had a free hand for far too long, and this election is a referendum on President Bush. If you want more, vote for a Republican. If you want to change it, vote for the Democrats.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THANK GOD FOR THIS DEMOCRACY AND THOSE PROTECTING IT

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of turn for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas is recognized.

There was no objection.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, we hear people across the aisle talk about, gee, a rubber-stamp Congress. Well, I can point to you, that is the reason there is no immigration or border bill right now is because this is not a rubber-stamp Congress. The President wants some things that we simply cannot provide.

But when we talk about the allegations about Republicans or the President shredding the Constitution, let me tell you, he does not shred the Constitution. He has sworn to protect it, and I am proud that people who want to destroy the way of life that we have in this country, people that believe that freedom and democracy and self-government is a terrible thing, they think that that leads to debauchery and degradation, and therefore, you need some holy ayatollah that tells you everything you can or cannot do, that sends women back to being chattels as they never should have been but still are in some areas of the world, that is what they want to do to this country. They want to destroy people. They want to kill us, and we have a President that understands that.